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MUSE AND MINT

BY

WALTER S. PERCY

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1914

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TO

MY DEAR MOTHER AND WIFE

WHO BEST LOVED MY MUSE
AND WHOSE LOVE WAS THE
MINT THAT EVER MADE IT
AN INSPIRATION AND JOY

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ПІВКУВА
ЬПВТІС
МЕАЛЮІЬК

MUSE AND MINT

I MUSED upon the strangeness of all things,
So different from the dream
Whereof the morning mounted up on wings
Above the world agleam
With light that trembled into life and love
As when a censer swings
And joy of promise sings —
"The dream whereof
The gleam above
The world is love!"

Oh, bitterness to muse and neither find
The beauty of the Muse
Nor yet the music which the soul divined
Ere set the rosy hues
In sombre lines that disenchant and fret
The heart with growing grief
Which struggles for relief —
"O Muse, but let
My spirit yet
The rue forget!"

As if to answer me a little child,
To whom the sunshine's glint
Was gloom forever, on the corner smiled
And vended sprigs of mint,
As though there were in blindness still a bloom
And fragrance which could reach
The passer-by and teach —
"In glint or gloom
There's mint in bloom
To earth perfume!"

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NATURE

FIREFLIES

THE murky night hung dank and dark
The Summer shower after;
A distant dog's staccato bark
Disturbed the strollers' laughter;
The mournful whip-poor-will's lament,
The frogs' and crickets' chorus
A weird, sepulchral feeling lent
To meadow-lot and morass.

A thousand insect-lanterns flashed
Their phosphorescent signals
Of living sparks that dot-and-dashed
Out swift electric riddles;
For scarcely was the eye upon
A single tiny glowlight
When wink, it flitted and was gone
Like prankish imp on show-night!

And while one guessed its next surprise
Afar from where it dwindled
A myriad others to the eyes
All intercrossed and kindled
Until the ghostly gloom became
Illumined with manœuvres
As though of fairies fanning flame
Within a park of lovers.

And thus does fancy people night
  With fugitive creations
Of phantom-folk whose fitful light
  Yet feeds our inspirations
And teaches us there is no dark
  But fellowships the presence
Of every soul that sheds its spark
  Of humble incandescence.

BO-PEEP

Everywhere I ramble
In the ides of May,
Through the boughs and bramble
The wood-nymphs play.
Where the sunshine dapples
Shadows all a-creep
Beneath the budding apples,
Dances Bo-Peep.

Over where the mosses
Make a coverlet
Which the Spring embosses
With a green fret,
From the long hibernal
Dreaminess of sleep
Wakes with dimples vernal
Little Bo-Peep.

Violets and bluets
Mischievously peek;
Monks like pigmy druids
Play at hide-and-seek;
O'er each stump a picket
Spies with cunning deep,
And in every thicket
Beckons Bo-Peep.

PEEP-OF-DAWN

THE tallyho of slumber's on
The last relay of dreams;
Posthaste it rides with ribbons drawn
O'er curvetting gray teams.
The wayside house just left behind
Was Where-the-Cock-Crew Inn;
The road ahead with rose is lined
And known as Work-to-Win.

Intoxicated senses sink
In visions of delight;
And Venus' eye begins to wink
Where it outrides the night.
Sly fingers lift the window-shades,
But ere espied are gone;
And on the drowsy milking-maids
Tiptoes the Peep-of-Dawn.

Dame Nature in abandon lies
With skirts in disarray,
And overtaken with surprise
Is kissed by stealthy Day;
The coverts rub their eyes and wake,
And dreaming Love anon
Goes forth on Rosy Road to make
A tryst with Peep-of-Dawn.

THE RILLY RIVER

The cold and turbid flood of Spring
Has melted to the Summer shallow,
And now the vivid greeneries cling
Along the margin lush and fallow,
And where were sombre deeps and chills
Are silver trills of rippling rills.

The loiterer upon the bridge
Which o'er the eddying river poises
Salutes the island's sandy ridge
That reappears; the eye rejoices
In all the old familiar frills
And saucy spills of rippling rills.

The rod and reel the rapture feel
And from the boat take finny chances,
But less for luck than with the keel
To be a part of runic dances;
For thus the river's music thrills
Like joy that fills the rippling rills.

CHERRIES

CHERRIES! Cherries! Cherries!
The robins are excited and delighted
To change the fare at last;
For 'twas bugs and grubs and slugs
Over two months past.
Now it's cherries till the berries
Ripen full and fast.

Cherries! Cherries! Cherries!
The robins are excited and affrighted;
There's a man up the tree
In a big wig and rig
That would scare a chickadee —
But a robin — see him bobbin'
In a solemn colloquy!

Cherries! Cherries! Cherries!
The scare-crow is indicted and requited
With a pocketful of eggs
Baby-blue, with 'em too
Gettin' ready bill and legs
For the Summer that's a comer
When the cherry-season begs.

Cherries! Cherries! Cherries!
The robins are excited and delighted —
Not the redbreast but the kind

That eclipse with cherry lips
And are not a whit behind
Robin Jerries stealin' cherries
When the dummy's but a blind.

A SNOWFLAKE

MILLION-NEEDLED star of hoar,
Parachuting little kite
Sailing by my cottage-door,
Flurried, jostled, fairy-light —
Whither, whither, whence and why
Comest thou of crystal
From the welkin, hasting by
Like a lost epistle?

Softly did the snowflake sigh
"Read me as I rest awhile!"
So I read the whence and why;
For the snowflake is a smile,
Melting Heaven-dew congealed
Lest we miss its beauty,
Love in miracle revealed
On the wings of duty!

THE BLIZZARD

THE whited pumice of the storm
  Is over house and hill
Or drifted into shroudlike form
  About the ruined mill.

The fences hide beneath the drifts;
  The snowy terraces
Ascend to where the hemlock lifts
  Its virgin-broidered dress.

The trackless highway challenges
  The sweltered caravan
Of traffic and in fastnesses
  Of chalk imprisons man.

The wind-wolves howl at cottage-door
  Or down the chimney leap;
The windows all are rimed with hoar
  Where frozen fingers creep.

The house-frame groans at blast and frost
  Like quarry of the pack
O'ertaken, but though torn and tossed
  Still stout of heart and back;

Still stout of heart like us secure
  By ruddy fire warm,
Too humbly thankful to be poor
  While sheltered from the storm.

FIREFLIES

THE murky night hung dank and dark
  The Summer shower after;
A distant dog's staccato bark
  Disturbed the strollers' laughter;
The mournful whip-poor-will's lament,
  The frogs' and crickets' chorus
A weird, sepulchral feeling lent
  To meadow-lot and morass.

A thousand insect-lanterns flashed
  Their phosphorescent signals
Of living sparks that dot-and-dashed
  Out swift electric riddles;
For scarcely was the eye upon
  A single tiny glowlight
When wink, it flitted and was gone
  Like prankish imp on show-night!

And while one guessed its next surprise
  Afar from where it dwindled
A myriad others to the eyes
  All intercrossed and kindled
Until the ghostly gloom became
  Illumined with manœuvres
As though of fairies fanning flame
  Within a park of lovers.

WHEN I SURVEY

'Tis midnight and I am in the country!
The world is still and all the lights are out
Save for the ones which stud the firmament
With diamond clusters everywhere about.

Like royal David pondering the Heaven
I stand uncovered, torn and battle-spent
And from my flocking meditations driven
By spectral bears and lions; but not as he
Victorious, for the raveners I smote
Were modern pride and doubt which stalked my faith
For its ewe-lamb of trust and by the throat
Dragged it away from me to bleating death.

My staff is broken and the scroll I read
A thousand nights like this lies crumpled where
I flung it as with fevered brow I fled
In mocking disillusion and despair
From burnt-out wicks still sputtering in the oil
Of self-illumination with the quizz

"What am I? What the infinite I Am?"

God! If the answer were in spirit-toil
Or as the echo of Whatever Is!

The stars smile down on me undimmed and calm.
My soul! Have I so many years been blind

To all the glories wheeling o'er my head
And starry with the challenge of my quest?

Orion jewel-girdled and behind
Coursing his dogs, in mighty combat strange
With red-eyed Taurus!

And the Charioteer
Flashing toward the goal in full career!
The thrice-immortal Twins the chase abreast,
Cheering the race but keeping out of range
Of Ursa's long, lean paws where his huge frame
Looms in the Polar Circle!

Farther south
The Lion's crouching form, with gleaming eyes
And shadowy mouth!

The Plowman of the skies,
Proud of Arcturus' fame!

And Hercules
Setting his giant heel upon the fang
Of the unwieldy Dragon; while beyond
The Serpent's Crown makes mockery of the deed!

Far over by a handful of degrees
Imperial Vega rides the horizon,
Harped on by Lyra, as when morning sang
The genesis of systems God-decreed.

Already shines afar the Northern Cross
Where else were only dreariness and dark,
Like flaming symbol of a holy Cause
Which bore its ensign up the Winter arc
And more divinely glowed with sacred fire
Than the tiaraed Lady of the Chair
With dazzling looks, or than her daughter whom
Impetuous Perseus, thinking her so fair,
Delivered by the right of passion from
The Beast with jaws of grossness open wide.

Nor would I miss the Eagle, argus-eyed
And swift on wings of night.

What! Call this Night,
With thousand thousand suns in timeless space
So vast that distance gives no parallax
And centuries untold would pass ere light
From the remotest wanderer could burn!

So vast yon fires are a hundred-fold
More luminous than ours to them in turn,
And it in lost direction would dissolve
From Earth's own lode-star here yclept the Pole!

So vast that hosts so numberless revolve
In unison as no assembled whole
Of man's most perfect mechanism moves,
Yet by the which he boasts perpetual noon
As though the elements he late improves
And plays them in a more triumphant tune.

What! Call this Night and our small dial Day
Because by it we see ourselves and then
As mere automatons! Such is the way
Of over-conscious men; why, even I
An hour since called light a flickering lamp,
Philosophy the palimpsest of pedants,
The universe a papier-mache script,
While on it egotism's ink was still too damp
And speculation dript.

But as I mount the Great Highway of Pearl
Which turns to diamonds where its steeds strike
hoof
And chariot-wheels o'er the arena whirl
Until the course is flashing flint and fire —
How my soul thrills with this real vision of
The truth no lips can utter — with desire
To feel, not name, the Maker!

Night is Day
To eyes which earth's diurnal sun had blinded
But now see glory, majesty, design,
Love eternal-minded, Will divine,
Swinging out censers, filling space with throne-
rooms,
Ordering the times of destiny,
Making music and revealing purpose
Perfect but unthinkable, yet in man
Tuning a chord of nature in response
To fugitive notes of a melodious plan,

To stray scintillas of a Master-spell,
That we might have sufficient just of sense
To throb with feeling of theophany,
Just awe enough of the Ineffable
Out of our pinpoint nothingness to cry

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him?
And what is he that he should give a Name
Which we with lips vainglorious can laud,
A shape of Person to the Great I AM
Before we deign to worship Him as GOD?"

PAUPACK

Whither waters, gently flowing
In thy rocky channel-race,
Yet anon more noisy growing
O'er the stones which stay thy pace —
Gentle waters, whither going?

Laughing louder as they hurried,
Making music as they ran,
Deeper still the rock they furrowed
And a stolen run began
Half in cliffs and chasms buried.

Through the narrows flung they churning,
Leaped they in a mad cascade
And a bedded boulder spurning
They a misty iris made,
Spray to fitful spectrum turning.

Wildling waters thus romancing
Through the gorge in joy's career,
Wooded witchery enhancing,
Paupack picturesque and dear,
Haste thee onward ever dancing!

Let thy pilgrimage and laughter
Quicken an Algonquin vein
Till the lure I follow after
Flushes every sense again
Like the freshet of the water;

Till, O Paupack, each erosion
Of my nature is at flood
With a primitive emotion,
With an impulse of the blood,
Singing on towards the ocean!

FIRESIDE

MOTHER

Only one link is to us all
A never-failing bond,
Only one thought of time's recall
Makes all the world respond.
Dear ties there are that knit us close
As parent, friend or brother;
But God a universal chose
In the dear name of " Mother! "

Only one face no stranger is
Sometime at every side,
Only one love whose holy kiss
To few has been denied;
And whether we it treasure up
Or its affection smother,
Yet still the world's communion-cup
Is the dear name of " Mother! "

Only one touch of nature makes
Us feel alike at best,
Only one gift for our sakes
Outbalances the rest;
And whether good or evil, we
Are human to each other
When our most sacred memory
Is the dear name of " Mother! "

CHATTERBOX

Miss Chatterbox, come here and tell
Me all about the fairies' spell
So new to you but strange to me
Till you revive its mystery!
I, too, delight in Summer bowers
But you bewitch the birds and flowers;
I, too, rejoice in sunny nooks
But you make music of the brooks!

Miss Chatterbox, the secret share
Of all the magic of the air!
How comes the woodland's passing breeze
To be the whisper of the trees?
How come the echoes through their screen
To be the pranks of elves unseen? —
The bushy tails and beadlike eyes
The wizard and the kewpie spies?

Miss Chatterbox, the riddle read
Of yonder fence-side hearts that bleed,
Of yonder riot in the field
Where buttercups to daisies yield;
Where drowsy sprites sip clover-sweets
And bobolink with Cupid meets;
Where brownies over on the knoll
The puff-balls of the pasture roll.

Miss Chatterbox, how happens it
That you in all this witchcraft fit;
That in your feet the fairies dance
And from your eyes the sun-sprites glance;
That in your curls are elfin kinks
And in your cheek a cupid winks;
The wood-nymphs clap their hands with thine
And thou art nature's countersign?

LITTLE STOCKING

CUNNINGLY, patiently I knit you,
Little stocking,
Counting the stitches the while;
Lovingly in thought I fit you
While rocking
Back and forth, back and forth, with a smile,
On the baby-feet I kiss
Or in slumber absent miss,
Dreams flocking, little stocking,
Like this.

Skilfully, wistfully I weave you,
Interlocking
The strands in and out and around;
Tenderly in mind I leave you,
Little stocking,
As the woolen thread's unwound,
And I think of baby feet
You will cover when complete,
Half-mocking, little stocking,
So sweet.

Artfully I toe and heel you,
Little stocking,
Clicking the needle ends;
Fondly I fashion and feel you,
Heart a-talking

As the tapering fabric spends;
Will the baby-feet be true
To the dreams I wove in you?
Little stocking, little stocking,
Adieu!

ELFIN FACES

Round me gather Rosycheeks,
Clean and fresh as peaches,
Smiling daughters of the Greeks,
Golden-tongued with speeches.

"Papa, tell your little girls
All about the fairies!"
Bless my soul! they all had curls
And Cupid-lips like cherries.

Yes, indeed, and starry eyes
And merry little dimples
Something like a sly surprise
Hid in cunning wimples.

Yes, and twinkling baby-feet
Dancing midst the flowers,
Gathering the honey sweet
Through the morning hours.

But at twilight is the time
Each becomes a brownie,
Murmuring a sleepy rhyme,
Growing soft and downy

Till — say, I declare there springs
Up from either shoulder
Fluffy little angel-wings
That at first enfold her,—

Then I have to rub my eyes
All alert and scarey,
For right out the window flies
Every single fairy

And I'm left there all alone,
Peering in the corners.

. . . . .

Little elfin-faces gone
Leave behind them mourners.

SWEET 'STEEN

Little outgrown pinafore
Hanging there behind the door,
Seldom seen,
Sprigged all over full of buds
Like the yesterdays whose suds
Only partly washed you out —
What d'you mean
By reviving such a time
Like a phantom put to rout
Till it runs to rue and rhyme?

Ah, 'tis sad to think of it —
Missy that you used to fit
Till between
Top and bottom was a glance,
Now is wearing styles of France;
For alas, she's grown to be
Sweet sixteen,
With young ladyship's conceit
And its sprouting vanity —
Sixteen, pinafore, and sweet!

BOY

Boy, thou art the work of ages,
Disporting by creation's glades and streams —
Laughing at the sages
And filling all the pages
Of time eternal with thy hopes and dreams!

Boy, thou art the work of nature,
Commingling of earth and air and fire —
In consciousness and feature
A juvenescent creature
With active mind and limbs that never tire.

Boy, thou art the work of gladness
And meant to fill the world with lusty shout,
With laughter, not with sadness,
With goodness, not with badness,
With eager confidence and not with doubt!

Boy, thou art the work of Heaven,
A thought to give the world a bonnie heir —
A living joyous leaven,
A spirit nobly driven
To try the future and divinely dare!

A CHILD'S LIFTED CROSS

How are we taught by childhood's simple plea
Our greatest need and poor deformity
When such a child each vesper hour could pray,
" Lord, make me well and take my cross away!

" That I may share in joy and love return,
That I may live to labor and to learn
And that to-morrow may redeem to-day,
Lord, make me well and take my cross away!"

The help came down not as the cry went up,
Not as the thirst the giving of the cup;
Poor little one, if only we could say
God made him well and took his cross away!

'Tis thus we bring our own distorting grief
To our beloved Physician for relief;
And as our burden at thy feet we lay,
Lord, say 'tis well and take our cross away!

Thus too we bring our sin-misshapen soul
To our great Healer, who can make us whole,
And there beside His cross, not ours, we pray,
" Lord, make me well and take my sins away!"

Ah, time may hold surcease from pain and care;
Who knows what is the answering of prayer
Or why the Potter breaks the faulty clay?
Lord, make us beautiful in Thine own way!

THE BOY MILLIONAIRE

Boy, I'm worth a hundred million
And I'm sixty seasons old,
But you're worth about a billion
In another kind of gold!
I've the money, you've the treasure,
You've the future, I've the past,
I've the power, you've the pleasure,
Mine is fleeting, yours will last.

When you whistle through the clover,
Capturing the bumble-bee,
When the brook is running over
And the trout-line craftily
Feels the eddy — who can offer
You a kingdom more divine?
I've an overflowing coffer
But would trade it all for thine.

A LULLABY

Little birdie, fold thy wings,
Snuggle in thy nest;
While the wind thy cradle swings,
Baby-birdie, rest!
Oh, so wee and warm and near
To thy mamma's breast!
Oh, so free from harm and fear!
Go to rest, go to rest!

Little flower, hide thy face,
For 'tis eventide!
In the sleepy night's embrace,
Little flower, hide!
Oh, so wee and fair and still
On thy mamma's breast!
Oh, so free from care and ill!
Be at rest, be at rest!

Little baby, close thine eyes;
Fairies come for thee
From the land of lullabys,
Where my baby'll be
Oh, so blissful while she sleeps
On her mamma's breast!
And I kiss her smiling lips;
She's at rest, she's at rest!

THE LAST SONG

JUST one more little song, mother,
Before I go to sleep;
For thou hast often hushed my heart
To slumber soft and deep.
Before 'tis dark I long, mother,
For thy dear voice, which seems
To make thy gentle face a part
Of childhood's golden dreams.

Just one more little song, mother,
Before I sink to rest;
For thou hast often stilled my fears
Upon thy tender breast.
Thy love so great was strong, mother,
With childhood's safe repose
On lips that kissed away its tears,
In arms that held it close.

Just one more little song, mother,
Before I dream of skies
Where stars and flowers smile and shine
And angel-harps surprise.
But not in Heaven's throng, mother,
Is there a dearer face,
A sweeter song or soul than thine
The Gloryland to grace.

YOUTH

A VISION of morning,
A sparkle of dew,
With roses adorning
Life's pilgrimage through;
All joy and no sorrow,
No trouble to borrow,
An endless to-morrow,
And love ever true.

AGE

To sit in the gloaming
And muse by the fire
Till the spirit of homing
Takes wings of desire;
And the might-have-beens lighten
And the things-to-be brighten
And the heavenlies heighten
And the holies inspire.

SENTIMENT

A CORONATION

Dear, on thy brow I set a crown,
  Invisible yet rare;
Not jewelled gold, which burdens down
  With royalty and care.

I bring thee nothing but my love
  And what my hands can win,
And yet I crown thee, dear, above
  A kingdom's proudest queen.

I kiss each gleaming tress of thine
  Coiled lightly round thy head,
And woman's glory grows divine
  With love's aurora shed.

If thou canst but forget the rest,
  The gems I cannot bring,
This jewel doth become thee best
  To me, thy lover-king.

Dear, in my soul thou hast a throne
  All white and heavengold,
And on thy brow I set a crown
  That doth my heart infold.

I'LL BE WATCHING ON THE SHORE

She kissed me when we parted,—
I to sail the stormy main,
She to keep the little cottage
Snug until I come again;
And well do I remember
What she promised o'er and o'er: —
"When you come sailing from the ocean
I'll be watching on the shore!"

So I was a jolly skipper,
Coiling rope or reefing sail;
Many a distant port I entered,
Many a homebound ship did hail.
If I sent or got a message,
Always it the promise bore: —
"When you come sailing from the ocean
I'll be watching on the shore!"

Death came yawning in the tempest;
Wild and high the spindrift flew,
And from dizzy deck and masthead
Oft I thought my hour was due;
Till her dear prophetic promise
Sang above the billows' roar: —
"When you come sailing from the ocean
I'll be watching on the shore!"

But alas! One time I harbored
She was sleeping white and still
Where the ivy made a trellis
Of the lookout on the hill;
And the cold engraven marble
Yet the farewell promise bore: —
" When you come sailing from the ocean
I'll be watching on the shore! "

I GIVE THEE MY PROMISE

I GIVE thee my promise, sweetheart,
With thy dear lips to mine,
That nothing shall keep from us
The sealing of this sign;
As o'er the world I wander
By hope of fortune sped,
My heart will grow the fonder
For thy promise me to wed.

I give thee the token, sweetheart,
Whose circle on thy hand
God grant may ne'er be broken,
However far the land!
For where it pleaseth Heaven
To lead my errant feet,
This little token given
Will keep the promise sweet.

I give thee the keeping, sweetheart,
Of my own heart that pleads
For love's immediate reaping
And with the parting bleeds;
But I with arms that hold thee
Must labor for thee, too;
And so I fast enfold thee
And bid thee, love, adieu!

CHAMBERED ROSES

Over in Dolorosa Hall,
Romantic memories breathing,
There's a quaint old room with flowered wall
Of roses interwreathing,
The key on golden chain I wear
To guard the sacred chamber,
For as a bride demure and fair
My sainted Mary came there.

'Twas her dear self arranged it so
And helped to match the roses,
As she, alas, the ones which grow
O'er walls where she reposes.
I nurture these, the others seal
For subtler necromancy
Where Mary's loving roses steal
Around the room of fancy.

They ramble from each corner to
The border o'er the moulding
And on in buds and tendrils through
The ceiling's faded golding.
No hand shall ever tear them down
With cheap artistic violence,
For Mary wreathed the roses on,
Still fragrant with her silence.

TWO FRAMES

In the gallery of remembrance
  Down on Unforgotten Street
Hangs a picture of two lovers
  After they the vows repeat;
Lovely — handsome — picture — lovers —
  Golden-framed against the wall,
Love in rich and stately setting —
  Revenue and manor-hall.

And beside it hangs another,
  Limned again with lovers' pose,
Just as lovely on the canvas
  Till the golden in it glows;
But 'tis framed in white enamel
  Whereon lilies intertwine —
Love in sweet and simple setting —
  Virtue and a cottage-vine.

Love-in-woman stands before them
  With reflected gold and grace
But with struggling decision
  On her dew-and-flower face;
Eyes are drawn to frame of yellow,
  Heart to canvas set in white:
Rich man, poor man? Love-in-woman
  Chose and lilies turned to light.

PARS SUMMAE

I did not think that love was mine
Because I toiled;
But if I caught its every line
And not despoiled
More perfect love to grace my own,
Then might I feel
That I at love's supremest throne
Could rightly kneel.

I veiled my face when glory shed
Its trembling light;
Nor would I lift my humbled head
Till I as white
Could show the pureness of a soul
That doth reveal
Love which before the sacred whole
Can rightly kneel.

My altar was her blessing-place
Whence she bestowed
The gifts divinely of her grace
On worship bowed;
For as my adoration rose
To love's ideal
She lifted me as one of those
Who rightly kneel.

A VISION

Tall and fair and azure-eyed,
Covert glances 'neath the drooping lash
Like Cupid's arrows in an artful quiver —
She is this and much beside,
Which to tell in detail would be rash
By any but the beggar to the giver.

If I gathered, if she gave,
I could put it better into art,
By countless little charming things elated —
Silken tresses in a wave,
Cheek with stolen pigment from the heart,
And mouth the most inviting e'er created.

Still I'm short of total truth
Just to feature forth her lovely face
Wreathed in rebel-locked or coiffured limbus;
Yet the highest charm of youth
Is the soft inimitable grace
That bathes a woman with a glowing nimbus.

And this my goddess hath improved
By every feminine instinct of taste,
And still the deeper charm of spiritism —
Which, if it were the soul and loved
Some kindred soul in this world of love-waste,
Would laugh at every selfish catechism

Of worldly wisdom and its creed
And tremble to the fate which love revealed,
Flushed at its glimpse of Paradise, delirious
That life was not all craft and greed
But underneath its shallows half-concealed
Lay passion grand, transfiguring, imperious!

THE AFTERMATH

Lovers making foolish vows,
Thinking love is deathless
When 'tis fiercest to espouse
What it sings so breathless;
Now caressing, now confessing
In romantic stanza —
Such is passion and its fashion
Of extravaganza.

But the love that's worth a throne
Is the kind that later
More than sentiment alone
Proves and heavens greater
Than a frenzy of the fancy
Or a creed of nature,
Or the praises in fine phrases
Of a charming creature.

Oh, the happy aftermath
When the mating's over
And ordeals of life and death
Teach the whilom lover
That the woman, though for human
Charms he did enshrine her,
Is the essence of a presence
Sweeter and diviner!

PROOF-WORDS

THERE was a face — I loved it;
There was a pulse — I felt it;
There was a soul — I sensed it
And made it mine for aye.
There was a heart — I proved it;
There was a word — I spelt it;
Yet scarcely had commenced it
When called from dreams away.

There was a hope — I wreathed it;
There was a prayer — I sped it;
There was a seal — I gave it,
Then bade my love adieu.
There was a sigh — I breathed it;
There was a tear — I shed it;
There was a gift — I save it
To know my love is true.

MEMORIES

ADIEUS

When we from the ship or shore
Bid farewell — Oh, fare thee well!
Though the voyage may be o'er
Ocean-vasts and none can tell
Whether we shall evermore
Meet again, yet fare-thee-well
Means a hope whose accents spell
Till we greet again — farewell!

When we over sea or land
Godspeed wish — Oh, speed thee God!
Him we trust with kindly hand,
Narrow though the way or broad,
Sometime from the distant strand
Back again to bring us shod
Joyous o'er the way we trod.
Hope is Godspeed — speed thee God!

When our parting word fore'er
Is goodbye — God's way be thine!
Whether 'tis ourself who fare
Or another we resign,
Yet committed to His care
And a future as benign,
We await the proof divine
Hope's goodbye is God be thine!

DUST TO DUST

EARTH to earth, we sadly sigh —
Beloved, beloved, why didst thou die?
Heaven, why untimely death
When so sweet are life and breath?
Earth and Heaven tell us why
Our beloved have to die?

Dust to dust, the elements
Swallow clay and sleeping sense.
Wilt thou wake, beloved, yet
To the eyes no longer wet,
To the arms that no more ache,
Wilt thou, O beloved, wake?

Ashes to ashes mingling,
Flesh they cover, tears they wring.
Beloved, beloved, the flowers I bring
Wither, but the ones that spring
O'er thy mould with promise smile
"Dearest, yet a little while!"

LITTLE WORDS

Speak but the little words of truth
And they shall live when thou hast ceased to be;
The lips by trial daily put to proof
Breathe nothing sweeter than sincerity,
Helping thy brother to be true like thee.

Speak but the little words of love
And they shall linger when the tongue is still;
For whether there be thrones they shall remove,
But love abideth all our thoughts to fill
And fashioneth remembrance as it will.

Speak but the little words of hope
And they shall cheer the way when cometh night
To thee or others who in dark would grope
But for the courage of thy humble light
Fed by the oil of promise —" All comes right."

Speak but the little words of trust
And they shall rob the struggle of its cross,
The heart of sorrow's bitterness, the dust
Of victory o'er our dead — for out of loss
Trust sees eternal gain transform the dross.

A WAYSIDE LIFE

A LITTLE stream sprang from its distant source,
And through the peopled valley with a song
It held its smiling uneventful course,
Grateful with cooling draught the whole year long,
Till they who daily drank of it grew strong.

A little star shone softly in the night,
And in the many-gloried heavenly host
It shed a true and never-failing light;
So that for constancy 'twas loved the most
Because for lack of it no way was lost.

A little coin was passed from hand to hand,
And humbly served its mission day by day
In the life-needs its value could command;
Pure gold it was though small in currency,
And many a debt of want sufficed to pay.

A humble life was lived where others felt
Its truth and worth to hand and lip and eye;
And when 'twas spent its debtors mutely knelt
To thank the Giver for its ministry —
The stream, the star, the coin they travelled by,

The vanished life whose benison of grace
Was like the cup of water or the beam
Of friendly light or as the gold whose base
Of humanness, though it might dull the gleam,
Yet perisheth and leaves its worth supreme.

O TEAR!

O TEAR of grief from stricken spirit wrung
By nature's requisition of our shrined
And best-beloved! — if sympathizing tongue
Can speak one word of hope or comfort kind
By Heaven approved,—
Drop thou upon it like a jewelled sphere
Whose trembling iris makes it lovelier!

By such a Heaven-inspired word, O tear
Of human sorrow, thou art made to be
Divinely thrilled with comforting more dear
Than helpless love or hopeless sympathy! —
For thou art filled
With visions now of soul's supremer sphere,
Like thine but infinite in love, O tear!

Thou art too blurred and blinding now to let
Thine eye behold the beauty of the light
That glimmers through thy grief,— but thou
wilt yet,
If pleaseth God, with faith-anointed sight
And love anew
Dissolve in joy and for the sepulchre
Glad that which makes it victory, O tear!

THE DEW OF DUST

O DEAD of earth, rejoice!
The flowers from the dust
By vernal dews arise
And smile reviving trust,
When from their Wintry tomb they wake
And into Summer beauty break.

And so shall sleeping be
Within our fleshly tomb;
The Eastertide shall free
The life that lieth numb,
And from the dust shall rise anew
The deathless bloom of Spring and dew.

Say not to ashes turns
Our being with its shell,
For a divineness burns
By death unquenchable
To warm the poor chill mould we're of
And our undying nature prove.

If not another grace
Shall clothe our soul's desire,
Let not the grave efface
What in us doth aspire!
So shall we nobler be than clay
And give a truth to "life for aye."

A SMILE

As from the window-pane a light doth gleam
To cheer the traveller at eventide,
So was her smile the ever-friendly beam
That lit the way or bade the guest abide.

She knew no cross or care but what was eased
By smiling trust that everything was best;
When all around were happy she was pleased,
When she could make them happy she was blest.

We knew who loved her best, the sweetness of
Her always gentle look and Christian grace;
She filled the home with precious motherlove,
And no one else can fill her sacred place.

Hers was the smile that shone in sun and storm,
In ministry to others or when they
Looked to her out of trouble, and the charm
Of such serenity drove doubt away.

She smiled in life and then the miracle
Of soul untroubled triumphed to the end;
She smiles in death to comfort us — " 'Tis well!"
To let us know that she hath found a Friend.

PHILOSOPHY

THE HILL-TOPS

THERE are cloudy, sullen skies,
But what of that?
There are discontented eyes,
But what of that?
When the day is gloomiest,
Over on the hill-tops west
There is sunshine. Brother, best
Think of that.

There are dour looks enough,
But what of that?
Tasks forbidding, hard and rough,
But what of that?
Though the vale the weather spoils,
On the hill-tops there are miles
Of old Sol's unconquered smiles;
What of that?

Living in the valley long,
Maybe that
Quenched the laughter and the song;
But for that,
Hearts might look to higher hills,
Kissed by sun and full of rills,
Smiling over cares and ills.
Think of that!

THE MAN WHO BEARS THE HOD

Go, mould and burn the clay to brick
With all the skill of ages;
It took the shovel and the pick
Before it took the sages.
But leaving that to honor's past
For things which men applaud,
Who is it makes the pile so vast,
An edifice to rise and last?
The man who bears the hod.

The potter and the architect
May shape and plan the temple,
The master-builders may erect,
Ennoble or assemble;
But leaving that to future fame
For things we rarely laud,
Who is it carries up the frame
On shoulders called in lieu of name
The man who bears the hod?

The dreamer and the statesman may
Inspirèd be with genius,
And in the oven put the clay
That rears renown between us;
But who must heap the bricks they mould
On backs and bases broad,
Toil up the scaffolds and uphold
The towers growing high and bold?
The man who bears the hod.

JOG ALONG!

Jog along! Jog along!
The day is young, the goal's ahead,
The limbs are strong and hope is fed
On promises where'er you look,
Of nodding bud and laughing brook.
Cheer up! Cheer up! while there's a song
Of bird or smile of sunny nook,
There's love and bread. So jog along!

Jog along! Jog along!
'Tis only noon and there's an inn
Where you may soon an hour win
Of humble fellowship and fare —
A luxury of life too rare.
Hail, friend well met, who in the throng
Is brotherly in spite of care!
There's human kin — so jog along!

Jog along! Jog along!
The sun goes down but twilight's still
To reach the town upon the hill;
And there the sun's an hour high
To give thee grace of foot and eye.
Keep on! Keep on! with dauntless will;
You've still the promise of the sky
The stars until! So jog along!

THE FAMILY TREE

Your genealogy may be
The finest thing on earth
Or merely a decadent tree
Of past descent and worth.

The children of the Puritans
Should have the Pilgrims' souls
Or else an alien wire spans
Your insulated poles.

An aristocracy of breed
Is that which keeps the stamp
Of spirit from heroic deed
In patriot hall or camp.

The veins whose life-blood flows for home
Or right or liberty
Should be the same from which they come,
To keep the nation free.

To find in our ancestral line
A sire of noble blood
Puts on us truth to make the sign
Of our escutcheon good.

Colonial forbears condemn
Like ghosts from hollow boles
Unless we reincarnate them
Without their shrouds and stoles.

To be well-born a century back,
A century of fruit,
A century the soil to pack
About the ancient root,

Is such a heritage we well
May trace it to its source
For all from which its scions swell,
Its vital ichors course.

REPLEVIN

WHO can replevin all his own
From his platonic debtors —
From plagiarists perchance unknown
Who steal his thoughts or letters?

His property is small or great
As it is worth the using,
And such a tribute to his rate
Makes property worth losing.

To say or do a thing that's fine,
Which makes the world the wiser,
Should be a royalty divine
To any but a miser.

Their pound of flesh let Shylocks sue
And bank in figures seven —
Our noblest own is what is due
In goods beyond replevin.

HOMILIES

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Truth is the vision of the skies
That does not ask us to be wise
But just to lift perceiving eyes
Wherever there is living light
To clearer make the way of right
Or soiled humanity more white.

Truth is the meaning of all things
Not to the mind but to the springs
Of love and peace and fashionings;
For what we love is life's concern
And hope is more than sages learn
And truth is most to which we turn.

Truth is the spirit of all truths
Which from the same supremeness moves
And universal purpose proves;
Truth is the light and not the spheres
Whose laws are known to only seers;
But by the stars the sailor steers.

Truth is the image of its God
Who all its endless vistas trod
And flung His attributes abroad;
For while too rare to minds more dense
Its mirror makes it real to sense
And gives its soul an evidence.

FRIENDSHIP

O Friendship! On life's crown the pearl
Amidst its jewels rare,
A star for peasant or for earl
The other gems whate'er —
Be diamond on the kingly brow
Or garnet dull on toil,
The hearted radiance art thou,
Of noblest might or moil.

But ah, to only value thee
As treasure of desire
For peerlessness of purity
We gain to but admire;
And not to feel thy inner worth
As stuff of primal deeps,
Some miracle of troubled birth
Where lowly nature creeps!

Is this, O Friendship, worthy of
The praises of the Muse,
Of life so lightly prone to love
But fire to refuse?
If only in our hand we hold
Another's sacrifice
And give it back no gift of gold,
'Tis not the Pearl of Price.

THOUGHT

THINK nobly!
For the things we ponder are the sum
Of what we treasure and we do become
The fashion of our thinking — just as from
The chain we know the linking.
Therefore think nobly!

Think purely!
For our meditation is the glass
Through which our spirit doth in vision pass,
The face of God beholding — and the grace
Of his divine unfolding.
Therefore think purely!

Think truly!
For a true ideal is the light
By which we struggle up the lofty height
Of Truth's supreme divineness — and the right
To which it doth incline us.
Therefore think truly!

WHEN I'M NO MORE

Will yonder Orient flush with morning hue?
Will on the flowers shine the crystal dew
And Heaven retain its soft cerulean blue
When I'm no more?

Will yet the jasper ocean lap the beach
And woo the wildflower just beyond its reach?
Will yet the treebirds murmur each to each
When I'm no more?

Will yet the laughing brook keep on its way?
Will yet yon moon smile sadly o'er my clay
And those bright twinkling stars dance in the day
When I'm no more?

Will yet a smiling world salute the dawn
And still its course of love and joy flow on —
My image once some heart enshrined soon gone
When I'm no more?

What means this chill misgiving — fate or fear?
Death, rend the veil and calm this dark despair!
Say, tell me will this memory be dear
When I'm no more?

. . . . . .

Ah Death, thy only kindness is the bliss
Of answer in love's fondest parting kiss
That one at least my humbleness will miss
When I'm no more!

THE BLAZED TRAIL

Life is a human wilderness
Where duty, right and truth
Are tangled in the morasses
Of folly, doubt and youth.
I know I cannot hope to cleave
A path through brake and swale,
But I a guiding index leave
If I but blaze the trail.

The forest as I struggle through
By compass, sun and stars
I'll mark so that another, too,
Can travel by my scars.
From woods where labor would get lost
And feet would err or fail
I'll single pines on ridges crossed
And blaze on them the trail.

O'er range and river toward the West
I'll keep and pray to learn
Not what is easiest, but best,
And worth a life's return;
For though I shall not pass again
The way I thus prevail,
It is my task for other men
To blaze the homebound trail.

GRIEF AND JOY

Grief said there was no gladness
At the season of the Child,
But only memories of sadness
In homes where babes once smiled.

Joy said there was no sorrow,
But found solace in the touch
Of gladness that perhaps to-morrow
Would need our cheer as much.

. . . . . .

Grief said that songs awaken
Echoes of our buried love,
As when silent chords are shaken
And still responsive prove.

Joy said it yet were stranger
If our babes made Bethlehem
Not more dear because the manger
Bore Him who gathered them.

. . . . . .

Grief said that gifts but mocked us
With the treasures snatched away
And with chains forever locked us
In tombs of memory.

Joy said that gifts were token
Of our love and its domain,
Earnest of our hopes unspoken
Love would get again.

HOPE

I HAVE a hope — 'tis spirit-born
  And spirit-winged beside;
'Tis like the holy light of morn
  When Heaven opens wide.

Hope like the bird whose every note
  A loving Father's hand
Hath tuned within its swelling throat
  As though the song were planned!

What is it but the joyous sense
  Of love and harmony?
What is it but the evidence
  Of life's divinity?

That hope which makes us most divine
  And like to what it clings —
That hope which makes our hearts incline
  To higher, holier things —

That hope which spells eternal youth
  And goodness infinite —
Hath reason in it strong as truth
  And logical as light.

SOWING AND REAPING

Sow on though another age
May do the reaping!
Sow on, for the final wage
Is in the keeping
Of our divinest Master, who declared,
"Sow on, for he shall reap not who hath spared!"

Reap on what another age
Began by sowing!
Reap on, for the highest wage
Is in the knowing
The fruit is garnered and the harvest-song
To sower and to reaper doth belong!

HOPE ON!

Hope on! For there is no rising star
When shadows creep across our sky
More precious than this beam afar
That trembles through eternity.

Hope on! That infinite desire
Is but a foreglimpse of the dawn
Of an immortal, holier and higher
Day of perfection; therefore hope on!

Hope on, lest the heart be cankered
By its own sense of dumb despair!
But rather let the soul be anchored
To the veiled Heaven over there

Where the light trembles through the mist
And hope becomes more lucid faith,
Yea, glad expectancy — for lo, the Christ
Bids life unfold its wings and death
And doubt begone! Therefore hope on!

HEARTED GOOD

Blest be the goodness which is spirit-fruit
Of reverence as worship is of awe,
Till goodness is both ripening and root!
For just as truly as that it doth draw
Its substance from divineness it must shoot
By the same potency of nature's law.

We may dispense the good we never grew
As those who borrow; or we may profess
The goodness which we know but never do,
And so put on a form of fruitfulness;
But ah, 'tis barren-hearted and untrue
To worthiness, whate'er its outward dress!

To love as well as practise what is fine,
To be what we would fain be taken for,
To ripen from the root whose tendrils twine
Around the very heart whose currents pour
Into the good we do — this is divine
And living fruit that blesses more and more.

COUNTRY

AMERICA

Divided by the ocean's vast
From other dear and shining strands,
The wonder of the storied past
Confesses this the land of lands;
The refuge of the fair and brave
When freedom was denied her due;
Sing with the wild, wild ocean-wave,
"America the true!"

Dear was the boon the pilgrim sought
Amid the redman's forest wild,
And dearly, too, the lesson taught
By this sweet Freedom's native child;
Which yet once learned forget no more,
O heir of that loved Liberty!
Breathe with the spirit of thy shore,
"America the free!"

Her stars and stripes that proudly float
So many citied states above,
Shall we forget that they denote
The oneness of a common love?
Sweet token to the patriot
O'er all thy territories wide,
Float to this one inspiring thought,
"America our pride!"

And still as fuller swell thy veins
And crimsoner thy throbbing blood,
Be virtue in thy broad domains,
The God of nations be thy God!
The echo of thy forest-days
Still mingle with thy voiceful sea
Or linger in the poet's praise,
"America the free!"

THE ALTAR OF COUNTRY

O Country of my altar,
Where the incense flame doth burn
And a priestly hand doth part the Temple-veil —
Let me ne'er in purpose falter,
Let me never from thee turn
Nor the vision of the holy ever fail —
O my country, till I learn
How to purpose not to palter,
Let the vision of the holy never pale!

O altar of my Country,
Sealed with bloody sacrifice,
Yet glorious with living triumph, too,
May I nobly offer on thee
Duty's most devoted price,
Never doubting it to be thy sacred due!
From thy altar let me rise
All to offer, O my country,
That I treasure most supreme and true!

(*From* "Greatheart.")

THE STARS OF DESTINY

THE midnight stars wheel in their course
Through trackless vasts of space,
And every distant sun's a source
Of motions taking place
Beyond the reach of eye or thought,
Yet part of Heaven's design
In order infinitely wrought
By majesty divine.

We cannot know the perfect plan
In such a universe,
Nor what its horoscope for man,
Be it for good or worse;
Enough the same law rules the stars
And human destinies,
And man the future makes or mars
As he observeth these;

As he the lesson of the past
Applies to issues new,
And makes experience forecast
The Fate which cometh true
Because it is the TRUTH and moves
Though oft in courses strange,
And like the time-eternal proves,
The stars that never change.

LAST OF THE GRAND ARMY

THERE they come with feeble step,
There they come with lessened rank,
And yet pathetic with the martial air
And ancient discipline of field and camp!
There they come with sounding pipe,
There they come with armor clank;
The dimming uniform's parade each year
And ensign's flaunting — Tramp! Tramp!
Tramp!

Thus they pass in broken corps,
Thus they pass in mounted troop,
Across the square in valor's proud review,
Beneath the victor's green triumphal arch;
Heads with many a Winter hoar,
Upright shoulders now astoop;
Their once imperial numbers grown so few,
But bravely onward — March! March!
March!

Many a soldier's vacant place,
Many an officer's blank post,
And many a veteran, too, with touching zeal
To mend the losses hobbling along;
Many a scarred and figured face,
Many a luckless member lost
With silent eloquence the tale reveal
Of desperate battles — On! On! On!

By Gratitude's tall monuments,
By private cemetery tombs
Where floral wreaths from loving hands lie mute
Upon each honored grave for Memory's sight;
Bowing heads in reverence,
Treading slow with muffled drums,
With tear-dimmed eye and sorrowful salute
And lowered standard — Right! Left! Right!

Every footfall of the past,
Every annual elapse,
The silent hearts and silent years no more,
Half-echo, mingle in that ghostly tread
And seem to swell the muster vast
And seem to say with hollow steps,
From all that mighty vanguard gone before
To this small rearguard — Dead! Dead! Dead!

A few more years bivouac here,
A few more years of sepulture
In trench or dungeon, grave or moaning deep,
A few more years of Death's soft slumbering night
Till all that spectral host appear
Before the throned Cynosure
Whose reveille will call them from their sleep
To Heaven's reviewing — Right! Left! Right!

No shotted cannon, deadly arms,
No trophy of a fallen foe,
Till God define the worthiest conqueror;
Him who has vanquished Death and conquered
Doubt
And faced a thousand alarms
Till life sits firmly on his brow
Or echoes through the happy Evermore,
Ye host of victors — Shout! Shout! Shout!

VINCIT OMNIA JUS

With one foot on the rock of right already won
And one upon the rock of faith no right can be undone,
I stand prophetic-voiced that presently from these
Right peak by peak shall grandly rise in towering Pyrenees.

The Liberty we know and passionately love
Shall bless the vineyards far below that drink the snows above;
And in the guardian frown of Freedom's lofty height
Shall think 'tis God who cometh down to thunder for the right.

As from the granite base where we must battle for
To firmly plant each sacred Cause, we rear the mountain o'er,
The bolt of stormy skies shall burst above each peak,
Assuring us when man defies oppression God doth speak.

And if from some sheer crag a vanguard hero fall
The while the coward safely lags who'd rather be a thrall,

We'll set a cross upon the cliff from which he fell
And over it a victor's crown of Freedom's immortelle.

But better still we'll climb inspired by his fate
To heights of liberty sublime unreached by tyrant's hate;
And Right shall look at last from mountain-top to land
In glad humanity more vast, in destiny more grand!

THE FLYING JACK

The sky was blue and smiling down
Upon a human sea;
Old Glory fluttered, danced and shone
In varicolored glee.

A merry breeze went laughing through
The laughing folds of silk
Until the red and white and blue
Were sylphs with teeth of milk.

Yet not for them the rapturous eyes
Of shouting crowds were bright,
Who came to hail with praise and prize
The hero winged for flight.

"The first to fly," the challenge read,
"Shall win the wreath and cup."
He spread his pinions and o'erhead
A dizzy height went up.

"Bravo! Bravo!" they shouted as
He spiralled down and down;
Then surged toward him in a mass
And wreathed him with the crown.

He smiled and in his eyes of blue
And on his cheeks of red
A something noble came to view
As gallantly he said:

"The cup I'll keep, the wreath I'll place
Where it by right belongs;
The first to fly my hand shall grace
And you acclaim with tongues."

So saying towards his ship he stepped
And set the sails again,
Then in a rising circle swept
With sun-kissed face and plane.

They wondered when they saw him rise
Toward the streamered staff
Until he grazed its middle thrice
And cleared it with a laugh;

Until above its gilded ball
He steadied and from high
The trophy flung before them all
With practised hand and eye.

Upon Old Glory's head the wreath
Fell true and with it fell
The airman's words to those beneath
Who needed but their spell:

" The first to fly above our land
On wings that never lag
I crown with patriotic hand,
Our country's starry flag!"

And then he doffed his cap and lo,
A jackie's suit he wore
As circling still he cried, " Oho,
I've flown in peace and war! "

I rubbed my eyes and all was fled
Except the silken folds
Of Glory floating overhead
A sailor-boy which holds.

HUMOR

SAP'S A-BILIN'

Out in the country where they tap
The maple-trees in Spring,
There's something doin' on the map
When March is on the wing.
The bar'ls and buckets overrun,
The busy farmer's smilin',
The cracklin' fire helps the fun;
For sap's a-bilin'.

Out in the country where they all
Have lived a hundred years
And heard the go-to-meetin' call
As Sunday storms or clears,
Thermometer's a-risin' when
For trouble folks are spilin';
Till some one pokes the kettle — then
The sap's a-bilin'.

Just hold a bit — don't let it burn
By bein' too intense!
The man who biles has first to learn
A leetle common sense.
It's sugar that we're bilin', mind,
Not human nature rilin';
So jest go back to sweetness kind
When sap's a-bilin'!

JUST MUD

WHAT's this live stuff you call a boy
  Just in the plastic stage
And fairly oozing with the joy
  Of youth's unmoulded age?
What's this to fashion into form
  Of early blade or bud
Or fruit with life or color warm?
  Why say, just mud!

What's Summer's golden harvest-yield
  That ripens into grain,
The bloom of orchard, wood or field
  So riotous with gain?
What's this comes trooping with the grace
  Of man-and-woman-hood
From out the muck of yesterdays?
  Why say, just mud!

What's yonder statue borne aloft
  By noble edifice,
Which passers-by beholding oft
  Forget immortal is
Of living deed and living art
  (Now clay, once flesh and blood)
Both growing from a humble start?
  Why say, just mud!

KNOCKIN' ROUND

Funny how some men grow up
  Knockin' round —
Drinkin' out of fortune's cup
  Overwound
With the ivy of Japan
Or a South-American
Revolutionary plot —
Comin' back no matter what,
  Knockin' round.

After seein' half the world,
  Knockin' round
Under every flag unfurled
  Safe and sound —
Home again from climbin' Alps,
Raisin' Filipino scalps,
Fishin' in a Scottish tarn —
You will find him at the barn
  Knockin' round.

All the smiles of Beauty's eyes
  Knockin' round
Underneath Italian skies
  Or renowned
Erin's native land of charms
Fade away as in his arms
Blushes — just the same old girl
From whose locks he kept a curl,
  Knockin' round.

THE SNAIL AND STAR

A HUMBLE snail crawled from his shell one night
To drink the dew and surfeit on young greens;
How came he wise in nature when so slight
A weakling of it passes wisdom's means.

But as he inched along, a winking star
His locomotion mocked and oddity —
"How far, O pigmy gastropod, how far
Dost thou suppose it is from thee to me?

"And at the rate of travel thou dost creep
How long to bridge the distance would it take?
Yet I across its vastness nightly leap
While you a paltry rod of progress make."

"I may be slow," the snail vouchsafed reply,
"But then I'm no pretense, howe'er you twit;
Thou movest not at all except thy eye
And now as I perceive thy nimble wit.

"No doubt we both our mission magnify;
You give the world the cheer of astral fire
While from a lowlier position I
A proverb for its ridicule inspire,—

"A proverb which, while I'm the ancient butt,
Yet makes the human snail a byword too,
And often moves him more of life to put
In duty; therefore why so much ado?"

The star had no retort, so saved its face
By prompt amends: —"My brother, you are
right;
We both are filling our appointed place
To teach the world a lesson. So good night!"

THE OLD SOR'L HOSS

THE old sor'l hoss limps up the lane
And whinners for his oats;
But he will never work again
'Cept as the milk he totes
To skimmin'-station down the road
To sort-o'-make-believe
He's haulin' of an honest load
And earnin' his reprieve.

Sure that was paid for long ago
If twenty faithful years
Can make a critter's master owe
Return for what he clears
By plow and reaper, laden rack,
And stump-an'-loggin' bee,
Yet gives the beast-of-burden back
Oft scant humanity.

For when the old sor'l hoss's jints
Grow stiff with work and age,
There's many a man with musket pints
His death and keeps his wage;
But not this hoss with sorrel mane
And coat, which every morn
Comes limpin' up the scrubby lane
And whinners for his corn.

NICODEMUS BOGGS

Nicodemus Boggs was named
By scripture-loving aunts,
Though never for that virtue famed
Was Demus —— till by chance
His mind was turned to churchly choice,
And then one solemn night
He heard an otherworldly voice
Which put him in a fright
Call
——"Nicodemus! Nico-de-mus!
Nic-o-de-mus Boggs!"
Although there were some folks blasphemous
Who said 'twas only frogs;
Be that however as it may,
To Demus 'twas a sign;
So forthwith he began to pray
And talk of things divine.

Of course 'twas given him to know
Without a studied mind;
His tongue was loosened and the flow
Of words left wit behind.
Yet strange to say no church was moved
His parish to become,
Though Demus said it only proved
The church was deaf and dumb.
For certainly the call was plain,
As often half-asleep

He heard the selfsame voice again
In solemn tones and deep
Urge
——"Nicodemus! Nic-o-de-mus!
Nic-o-de-mus-s Bog-g-s!"
Although there were some folks blasphemous
Who said 'twas only frogs.

Be that as each opined, 'tis sure
With Demus soon it turned
To ague, and the only cure
For flesh which froze or burned,
The doctor ordered, was to drain
The hollow in the rear
Where Demus lived; for while in vain
He followed his career
Of human welfare, there had lain
The most neglected near.
'Twas remedied and ne'er again
Did Nicodemus hear
The voice which had become so famous
For back-door croaks and frogs
Call
——"Nicodemus! Nic-o-de-mus!
Nic-o-de-mus-s Bog-g-s!"

SACRED

WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is no weakling, howsoe'er
It needeth courage for its task,
But strength whose confidence to dare
Is that which humbles it to ask
A higher help, a higher word
To lift it, bid it trust and try,
Assured its selfless prayer is heard,
Its task beneath a Master's eye.

Faith is the reasoning of heart
Toward the Heart-of-hearts which beats
In unison with every part
Of all it quickens and completes;
And with a sense of love and plan
Sees only good from truth and right,
Wrong as the only ill which can
Defeat design and quench the light.

Faith is the fortifying gate
Which walls us in, our terrors out,
Through which we fare to conquer fate
Or flee for refuge from our doubt;
Faith blows the trumpet, mans the tower,
Inspires hope, believes in Heaven
And trusts the overruling Power
To care for what its will hath given.

Faith is the burden-bearer's stay,
The footsore pilgrim's trusty staff,
The victor's martial panoply,
The martyr's noblest epitaph.
Faith is the vision's inner eye
Whose pupil is the seeing soul,
Its iris the reflected sky,
Its long perspective Spirit's goal.

A FORGIVENESS

A PILGRIM long devout arrived at last
Before the Gate of Paradise, and cast
His staff aside triumphantly to press
Within the dreamed-of goal. But strange to
say,
It did not open to his eagerness
As knocking he solicited the way.

"Nay," said the Guardian Angel of the Gate,
"The proof of thy assurance I await,
The sesame and heavenliest word
That passes here! Three trials shalt thou
have,
And if thou hast not found it by the third
No privilege to enter canst thou crave."

So sure the Pilgrim was the truest right
Must be the one of evangelic might
He quickly answered "LOVE!"
The Angel's wing
Drooped o'er his countenance as he replied,
"Nay, such a plea might any sinner bring
Like any saint whose zeal is undenied.

"Canst thou not to the name come closer yet
Of Goodness' greatest key?"
The Pilgrim let
His thoughts go outward in a second quest

And slowly made response, "Why, then, 'tis
GRACE,
The covenant and seal of all the rest,
The chain whose lock is Love."
The Angel's face
Was still compassionate as he withheld
The entrance, and his pity would have spelled
The password in his eyes as he again
Made answer, "Grace is truly all our hope
In promise and fulfilment, but 'tis when
We lay it to our hearts the Gate we ope
And our admission most divinely plead;
For none can think the word but feels its need
And healing touch."
The Pilgrim's brow grew sad,
But as he pondered to his knees he fell
And rose as oft before in wonder glad —
"FORGIVENESS!"
The Angel answered, "Well!"
And stood aside to let him pass.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

THE Good Samaritan was he
Who had compassion not alone
Humanely but divinely. We
Must look beyond the Healer — see
The Sympathizing Savior — be
Forgiven, lifted up and shown
The heart of Love and in our own
Begin to feel the sympathy
Which from His humanness had grown
To deeds of such divinity.

How little 'tis to minister
To one poor soul unless we feel
The touching brotherhood of care,
The sense how easy 'tis to err,
To fall, to need another's prayer,
Another's help! But when we kneel
Our fellowfeeling must be real
Enough that we can rise and share
The burden of our own appeal
And help our brother's cross to bear.

He is the Good Samaritan
Who loves enough to never wrong,
To ever right a brother man —
To bind his wounds and shape the plan
Of life benignly so he can
His neighbor also cheer along.

Blest be the mercifully strong!
Blest be the human-hearted man
Who never quenched a living song!
For he is God's Samaritan.

SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

SHEPHERD of Israel, hear
The calling of thy flock,
And when we seek do thou be near
To lead us to the Rock
Where full and sheltered we
At noonday may repose
Or find at night security
From all our lurking foes!

Help us to trust thy care
Through green or barren ways
And voice our doubts and fears in prayer,
Our blessedness in praise!
If thorns beset our path,
To feel Thou leadest us
Is sweet assurance goodness hath
A loving purpose thus.

Guide us by living streams
That rise in mountain height
And up where wisdom's heavenly beams
Our spirits bathe in light!
Lead us to ranges high,
To visions rich and broad,
To pinnacles that touch the sky
And help us know Thee, God!

THE LADDER OF CLOUD

THERE's a beautiful ladder of fine-spun cloud
That stretches from earth to sky
And up and down it the angels crowd
With calling and soft reply: —

AMRAEL

Children of men, who only by sight
Know that the stars exist,
There was one that shone o'er the world last night
Through an aureole of mist.

MISHAEL

They only saw it who had kept
The vigil of the seers
With inner sense; but ye who slept
Knew not the sign of the years.

URIEL

The spirit of life became a star
And we the herald-host;
And we sang as the Wise Men gazed afar
And the Shepherds Heavenmost;

Host

Joy to the world! For lo, is born
The Gift-Child! Echo on
And on forever song of morn,
Yet trembling into dawn!

Refrain

Joy to the pure in heart! For thou
Alone dost know the worth
And meaning of the Gift, who bow
Before the Virgin-birth.

Chorus

All hail Madonna's Gift
That shall the earth to Heaven uplift!
All hail! Rejoice!
. . . . . .

What softening of angel-voice
And light and listening sense
Fell hush-like on the last "Rejoice,
Madonna-reverence!"
. . . . . .

The pearly wings the host enshroud,
The voices fade away,
And the beautiful ladder of fine-spun cloud
Becomes the Gate of the Day.

THE RISEN CHRIST MEANS VICTORY

Go forth and hail the Conqueror
With flowers and sacred psalms!
The triumph we observe is more
Than that of martial palms;
For lo! there cometh from the tomb
The Lord of life and life-to-be,
Around whose feet the lilies bloom;
The risen Christ means victory.

Go forth and on His living brow
Entwine a laurel-wreath;
For never was so great as now
The glory of His death!
The Cross and Sepulchre had been
The world's most damning tragedy
But for the conquered curse of sin;
The risen Christ means victory.

Go forth with precious ointment of
Affection to thy dead,
With Easter's glad, believing love
That He Who for us bled,
Who slept and rose again, is strong
To roll corruption's stone away.
And loose the Resurrection Song;
The risen Christ means victory!

THE EVERLASTING ARMS

When to our life dark shadows come,
Stern crosses, sacrificial cares
And other fancied temporal harms,
There is eternal refuge from
Our terrifying doubts and fears
Within the Everlasting Arms.

When o'er our souls temptations sweep
And goodness loses half its grace
As sin pursues us with its charms,
There is no refuge left to keep
But the eternal hiding-place
Within the Everlasting Arms.

When through the valley dark and drear
We walk or see another sink
And death o'ercomes us with alarms,
Be then, Eternal Refuge, near
To hold us up upon the brink
Within the Everlasting Arms!

HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP

THE task is done, the sun is set,
The evening shadows fall apace,
The course is run, and tarries yet
The glory only of the race;
But ere the guerdon of the toil
The fleeting soul shall rise to reap,
God maketh it to rest awhile —
He giveth his beloved sleep.

What though the eyes are closed in death,
The tired hands are folded now?
Life shall arise, saith living faith.
And ministry diviner grow.
'Tis but the hush before the day:
The Father bids his angels keep
The treasure that we lay away —
He giveth his beloved sleep.

But not, oh not forever thus
Doth death enshroud our silent ones —
We know not what transfigures us,
What miracle of quickening suns —
But we await their healing wings,
Their living flash, seraphic sweep,
The glory of the King of Kings
Who giveth his beloved sleep.

THE GLORY DWELLS

Oh, the glory that we dream of
Trembling over Bethlehem!
Magi following the beam of
Starry prophecy to them!
Shepherds startled by the gleam of
Heavenly light and angel-hymn!

Time hath made the vision holy,
But I know that glory dwells
Not in manger-village solely,
Nor in dream that prophet tells,
But wherever there's a lowly
Child-heart, there the glory swells.

Pride of earth and pomp of power
Dazzle with their tinsel show;
But compared to goodness' dower
They're as only glint to glow.
Pride is merely for an hour,
Goodness doth to glory grow.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

O Light of Life, shine thou
Into my soul as doth the Sun of Day
Into the world for seeing with mine eyes!
Reveal the good and evil — teach me how
To stumble not but walk the Living Way
That fills earth with the glory of the skies!

Let there be spirit-quickenings
That thrill the being to responsiveness
Lest vision be but human, uninspired!
Ah, make it throb until from vision springs
Anointed nature to in life express
The Grace which makes the Heavenly desired!

DESIGN

THE universe of rolling spheres
Is not for Deity's display
But for a purpose which appears
In its supernal harmony.

Its mass that in momentum sweeps,
Its energy of elements,
The order which its system keeps
Are aspects of omnipotence;

And power working such design
Is proof of Presence everywhere
Intelligent, supreme, divine,
Both in creatorship and care.

For in His watchcare of the worlds
He-Over-All doth manifest
A greater power than that which whirls
Them on their way at its behest,

A greater purpose than to span
The Heavens by His glory lit;
For 'tis the more eternal plan
Of making all creation fit

For fellowship with Nature's God
In higher terms of wisdom, truth
And love by perfect will endowed,
Whereof the worlds are but the proof.

Thou Supersoul, who Spirit art
And rulest star-host, wave and wind,
Teach us Thy majesty to heart
And feel in music perfect Mind!

SONG

GOLDEN HOPE

THERE is nothing in the world so sweet
  As the hope which never, never dies,
That sometime, somewhere we shall meet
  In gladder love beyond the skies —
  Oh, beyond the skies so golden,
  With the hope of Heaven olden;
For there's nothing in all the world so sweet
As the olden, golden hope again to meet!

There is nothing in all the world so fleet
  As the hope that ever, ever flies
Swift onward, upward to the seat
  Of perfect love beyond the skies —
  Oh, beyond the skies so glowing,
  With the hope of Heaven growing;
For there's nothing in all the world so sweet
As the glowing, growing hope again to meet!

There is nothing in all the world so great
  As hope that bids us, helps us rise
With more responsive hands and feet,
  With gladder tongues and clearer eyes —
  Oh, upon the skies so golden,
  With the hope of Heaven olden;
For there's nothing in all the world so sweet
As the olden, golden hope again to meet!

THE COMING CROWNING

When the chariots of glory
Come flashing from the east
On the day of Advent-story,
The crowning of the Christ;
When the clouds are seraph-mounted
And radiant of wing
With angel-hosts uncounted,
And the skies with rapture ring —
My soul, wilt thou undaunted
Meet the coming of the King?

When earth the blessed vision
With lifted eyes beholds
And feels the swift transition
Of glory that enfolds;
When from the skies descending
The hosts of Heaven bring
The Kingdom never-ending
Of which all peoples sing —
O Spirit, wilt thou blending
Hail the coming of the King?

When thrones are set for mercy
And love to minister
To the naked, sick and thirsty
And all who faint or err;
When the Lord of glory reigneth
And choired censers swing

With the praises God ordaineth
As Heavens their banners fling —
O Soul, a crown that gaineth,
Crown and enthrone the King!

THE LIVING CUP

GATHER all the beauty and the riches of the
world,
The flowers' blush and lover's flush,
The hoards of gold and pearl;
But you'll never have enough to sum
The wealth and treasure up
Like the blessing of the drinking from
The living water's cup.

Gather all the music and the fountain-springs
of love,
The heart's desire, censer's fire
And starry host above;
But you'll never have enough to sum
The soul of gladness up
Like the blessing of the drinking from
The living water's cup.

Gather all the glories and the triumphs of all
time,
Of temples' pride and kingdoms wide
And grace and art sublime;
But you'll never have enough to sum
The joy of Heaven up
Like the blessing of the drinking from
The living water's cup.

THE SINGERS

Oh, the song of the soul we have sought for forever,
In ages gone by and the ages to come,
But what of the voices whose noblest endeavor
Must lift it as high as the height it is from?
For the song must mount up on the wings of the Spirit
And out of the heart that kindles with love
Before all the world will listen to hear it,
Before the world's sense it trembles above.

Oh, the song of the soul we have sought for wherever
There's beauty or sunshine, glory or joy;
But what of the voices whose praises must gather
The echoes that melt with the lips they employ?
For the notes must spring up from the souls they awaken
And out of the hearts they kindle with love
Before all the world by their sweetness is shaken,
Before the world's life they triumph above.

Oh, the song of the soul we have sought for as treasure
Wherever are kingdoms, jewels or gold;
But what of the voices whose heavenly measure

The wealth of the world's richest treasure must
hold?
For the song must be born from the world's
greatest passion
And out of a Heart that was kindled by love
Before all the world its power can fashion
To glory like that of the Master above.

THE CROWN OF THORNS

O CROWN of thorns upon the brow
Of Him they nailed on Calvary,
The serpent's coil and sting wert thou,
The seal of sin and agony.

Chorus

For where the grief and thought of us
The Savior's brow had borne,
They put the MOCKERY *of the Cross,*
The crown of thorn, the crown of thorn.

O crown of thorns, whose suffering
The Savior for the world endured,
'Twas thus He healed the serpent's sting,
The evil mind of nature cured.

Chorus

For where the grief and thought of us
The Savior's brow had borne,
They put the SORROW *of the Cross,*
The crown of thorn, the crown of thorn.

O crown of thorns, whose wounds became
Redeeming scars of victory,
The glory where was once the shame —
The diadem of Heaven be!

Chorus

For where the grief and thought of us
The Savior's brow had borne,
They put the TRIUMPH *of the Cross,*
The crown of thorn, the crown of thorn.

SONG ALONG

I SANG an old song as I worked one day —
  What cared I who smiled,
    What cared I who frowned?
So long as my song made the task seem play,
What cared I how many were pleasure-bound?
I heeded them not unless they as well
Were singing a song that work-glad fell,
And then we together went singing along.

I courted my love when dreamers were we —
  What cared I who laughed
    What cared I who sighed?
So long as my love was the world to me,
What cared I for others the whole world wide?
I heeded them not unless they as well
Were dreaming upon the same love's spell,
And then we together went dreaming along.

So I worked with a love-song for my cheer —
  What cared I who hated
    Both labor and joy?
So long as my loved ones to me were dear,
What cared I how others made loving alloy?
I heeded them not unless they as well
Were part of the song which cherubs swell,
And then we together went singing along.

ECCE HOMO!

Upon the Cross I see Him nailed,
The man of Nazareth;
His brow is pierced, His visage paled
With sufferings of death.
Around Him gather those who hate
And those who love Him most
To watch His sin-appointed fate
With grief or ruthless boast;
And as His pleading face I scan
All history cries —"Behold the Man!"

His wounded hands and feet I see,
The fountain from His side;
O Calvary, O Calvary,
Behold the Crucified!
Yet not the cruel thorns are worst
Nor blood of anguish spilt,
But that the sinless One is curst
For all the race's guilt;
And as His pleading face I scan
All history cries —"Behold the Man!"

Yet as I on His visage marred
With guilt and sorrow gaze
It changes from the beauty scarred
To time's most wondrous face.
A glory as of Heaven breaks
Upon the crown of thorn

And every tortured feature takes
  A love by passion born;
For as His pleading face I scan
All history cries —" Behold the Man!"

THE LOVE THAT WASHED HIS FEET

She came as at supper the Lord reclined,
She came with purpose sweet;
Not of the host's or servant's kind
Withheld from Him at meat;
For she came to wash His feet.
She watered them with tears of grief,
She wiped them with her hair,
She kissed them till she found relief
And words of pardon there
As she knelt to wash His feet.

She loved the most because she knew
Forgiveness so great;
She loved, and nothing else could do
To prove her love complete
But to wash her Savior's feet.
No goodly laver did she own,
No costly perfume bring;
But hers was the truest service shown
Whose faith the world will sing
As the love which washed His feet.

O sinner, the Savior's present still
Beside Compassion's seat
To pardon whosoever will
The woman's trust repeat
And kiss the Savior's feet!
Let contrite tears be mercy's plea

And love its passion press
Upon the feet of ministry
That came to save and bless
The hands which clasp His feet!

MISCELLANEOUS

THE SHUT AND OPEN HAND

THE FIST

I SHUT my eyes and opened them,
And while they were shut I saw
All the dread things that happen to men
In the name of cause and law.

I saw the tortured toil and travail
As the cost of bread and birth;
I saw the skein of fate unravel
Around the helpless earth;

A million who had nobly striven
Go down to grim defeat,
A million who their heart-blood given
Spurned from proud Honor's seat;

Hope mocked and dear ideals shattered,
Truth crushed and crucified,
The fruits of love and labor scattered
And Greed o'er Goodness ride;

Curse like a ghoul despair and sorrow
Leave at the race's door,
Pledging to-morrow and to-morrow
Cursing the world still more.

And as men were broken and stricken
I saw the darkness loom

To a frown of Hate and slowly thicken
To a spectral shape of Doom.

Shadows, thunders, griefs and grossness
Gathered in a blacker mass,
Life's calamities and crosses
Wrapped the midnight of all space

Into — God! What awful likeness
Of a giant arm and wrist
Bulking blacker still to smite us
As a clenched terrific FIST!

THE OPEN HAND

I shut my eyes and opened them,
And when they were open I saw
All the glad things that happen to men
By a more benignant law.

I saw the smiling heaven bending
Above the fruitful land,
The beauty and the bounty blending,
The kiss of sea on strand;

The love in labor and the guerdon
Of home and wrought ideal,
The benison behind the burden,
The worth which works the weal;

The glory of the sacrificial,
The sanctity and song
Of Nature's benedictive missal
O'er suffering and wrong.

I saw the good and grace of seasons
Aglow with golden yield,
And giving trust a thousand reasons
In flowerfest and field;

Until a misty plexus trembled
In midair and anon
A presence as of Love resembled
Diaphanous at dawn,

With morning vestments all a-shimmer,
Yet from whose potent charm
Of godlike gloriole and glimmer
There stretched a Titan ARM.

Earth and sky seemed coalescing
By filmy fingers spanned
And became as if in blessing
A mighty, OPEN HAND.

THE MAN-BIRD

The man-bird harnessed on his wings,
Empowered the impatient heart
And mounted into space as springs
Some captive eagle when released
From durance; but though human art
Might imitate, its genius ceased
Too short to force one secret of
The wild, fierce mastery of flight
In spiral sweeps away, above
The dizziest pinnacle of sight.

Man could but follow as he dared
With plane and engine, chance and nerve,
Yet like a Jove who boldly fared
Across the firmament supreme;
O'er vortexes with plunge and swerve,
O'er air-abysses where the scream
Of harpies echoed mocking forth
On ears too tense — yet ever on
O'er blinding South and blasting North,
Triumphant up or headlong down!

Ten thousand feet on high, ye gods,
Man tries conclusions for your realm
And gambles life at daring odds
To ride above the storm-strewn fleece;
A modern Jason at the helm
By siren lured like him of Greece

To desperate hazard; yet to fail
One pulse-beat for a thrilling glance —
Ah, well the boldest might turn pale
And choose 'twixt glory and mischance!

A moment poised the avian,
Then earthward swooped as never Jove
Rode down the vault of superman.
Wind-surges roared and clouds fled by,
Death raced beside and demons strove
To wrench one slender part or ply;
But flawless-sinewed, man and steed
Came flashing, wheeling down and down
With thrice a Roman courser's speed
To earth and conqueror's renown.

THE PHANTOM CAVALRY

WHAT knows the world of battles? History writes
The deeds of men with blood and triumph hails
As trophy of their valor, armament
Or better fortune, thinking he who fights
With surer odds or tactics seldom fails
In the last holocaust of war's event.

Impassioned eyes see not the shadow-shapes
That hover on the flank of charging hosts,
Ready to launch themselves as chance array;
Not one of all the mustered lines escapes
When mockery's phantom centauri the boasts
Of martial pride downtrample and dismay.

Ah, Waterloo! where scarred battalions strove
And overwhelmed each other, blood-imbrued,
Hurling their troops with savage impotence —
The conquering cavalry which o'er thee drove
Was not the one the Corsican reviewed,
Nor yet the Iron Duke with grimmer sense.

Ah, Gettysburg! whose murderous brigades
Met in the shambles of a horror-hell
Or rushed like demons in the jaws of death —
Thy most resistless riders were the shades
Of other erstwhile terribles who fell
Drawing the sword from its envenomed sheath.

In vain each other's throats the blue and grey
Sprang at like wolves of Winter mad for flesh,
And yet unsated till the kill-lust leaped
In exultation's shout of victory!
Not all thy columns veteran or fresh
Could save the field by grisly corpses heaped

Against the spectral squadron which outrode
Both Fighting Phil and Morgan's Men alike,
As on the Battle's flank it weirdly hung
Or where the Dragon's Teeth of Hate were sowed
Sprang up as Headless Horsemen armed to strike
And crumple back the charge by fury flung.

They loomed like apparitions, terror-born,
Yet ghastly real and dreadly sinister,
Abreast of every vanguard and redoubt;
O'er trench and belching gun they swept in scorn
Or carried panic to the broken rear
Till all was carnage, cowardice and rout.

Invincible formations, onsets' surge
Of vengeance' boldest fiends, manœuvres dire
With compassing destruction — all before
The grewsome legionaries' mounted charge
Were swept like chaff by maelstrom wind and fire
And rose again in prowess nevermore.

But on the ghost-troop galloped as of old
In every bloody battle, never dead
And never yet defeated; phantoms still
That gallop, gallop o'er the mortal mould
Of every tragic battlefield once red
With madmen's life-blood at their country's
will!

THOU CALLEST ME BROTHER

Thou callest me thy human brother; well,
Am I less flesh and spirit than thyself
Or less entitled so to humbly dwell
In honest peace and plenty that to delve
Is equally as noble as to draw
From the rich depths digged up? Or is the law
Of brotherhood pretense? — Our separate lots
But differ as our make, not as our meed.
Do brothers share according to their thoughts
Or in the rough according to their need?
If thou dost think thee finer in the end
Than him thou flatterest, thou art no friend.

Thou callest me thy brother and dost praise
My struggle to get even, holding fast
Thyself the odds of vantage, so the race
Is to the swift and strong — and he is last
Whose toiling body forged the chariot-wheel
That rolls thee on to fortune. It were base
To make the difference one of feast and fast,
Of full and empty measure of our weal;
For I am he who's spent — the spender thou;
Yet thou dost call me brother! Heaven, how?

THE SINGING DEATH

Men whisper low of spectres, calibans
And curses almost devilish with doom,
Mysterious fiends like hellhounds, werwolves, ghouls
And other nameless shapes as jinns and janns
That spring from demon-haunts and skulk or loom
To terror-stricken fancy of weak souls.

But none have named the scourge of Singing Death,
The dread reality which out of hell
Comes forth as often as the blood-lust burns;
Foulness and fury volcanize its breath
As, ravening for flesh insatiate, fell
It swoops, devours and bloodier returns.

An army gathers flushed with high resolve
And there is martial music and display
Of glory ominous with human fate;
For ere the dial shall again revolve
The Singing Death exultantly will prey
Upon the host till horror outdoes hate.

A floating citadel superbly steers
Her ocean-course with victory-flags unfurled,
Alike to sea and foe invincible;
Yet somewhere from the blue as she careers

The Singing Death by Titan forces hurled
Will scream above her decks with damning
knell.

Hark! Hear you it like vomit from the throat
Of Hades hurtling through the sulphurous air,
With cross between the moan of Manes' wraith,
The torture of Inferno and the note
Of vulture-torn Prometheus' despair?
Ah! 'Tis the cannon missile's Singing Death!

It plays no diapason as the roar
It leaves behind where thunders loud intone,
Nor as the mighty swell of organ-reeds;
But all the stops of battle rising o'er,
It shrieks its way to finish with the groan
Of mortal agony where valor bleeds.

It sings not as a master for applause,
With perfect-voiced-and-chested range of gift
Till song becomes the triumph of all time;
But, rather, 'tis a dirge which discord flaws
With time's infernal arts lest God uplift
The world by love to Peace's choir sublime.

THE OLD MOON IN THE ARMS OF THE NEW

The young moon rises low
Just where the passing earth
Has stood aside to help it grow,
Once it has come to birth.

Yet on the old moon's back
The image of the new
Reflected is with lustre-lack
From earth it kindled to.

In gleaming arms of youth
The sire is embraced;
The silver edge of ancient truth
In younger truth is traced.

The clasp of morning love
Embosoms that of eve;
And memory's in the crescent of
Old age's child-reprieve.

A sickly sickle frames
The lusty one that reaps;
So power, pleasure, fortune, fame's
Pale as the keener sweeps.

Our latest wish infolds
The hope that's almost spent,

And every rim of promise holds
The past to future bent.

But not so feebly say
Youth hastens on the heels
Of age, but that 'tis nature's way
Our myriad orb reveals.

APR 1 2 19 5

3-29-15